

Intros and Conclusions

INTRODUCTIONS

Good introductions catch the attention of the readers. The intro depends on your situation: what you are writing about, who you are writing to, what your purpose is. If your situation is formal, your intro obviously will be more serious and direct. Most often, however, a very serious introduction is unnecessary. It also reveals your voice right away—the sound of your personality that you want to project. If your essay is humorous, your intro should convey a humorous tone or attitude toward your subject and your audience

START WITH...

- A dramatic incident
 - “It was an experiment that could have come from a horror movie. Geneticist Walter Gehring took a gene that controls the development of eyes in mice and inserted it into fruit fly embryos, among the cells that normally develop into legs. Legs they became—but with eyes all over them.
- A story relevant to the subject
 - As my friend Denise and I trudged across the University of Tennessee campus to our 9:05 am class, we delivered countless head nods, “Heys” and “How ya’ doin’s” to other African-Americans we passed along the way. We spoke to people we knew as well as people we didn’t know because it’s an unwritten rule that black people speak to one another when they pass. But when I stopped to greet and hug one of my female friends, who happens to be white, Denise seemed a little bothered. We continued our walk to class, and Denise expressed concern that I might be coming down with a “fever.” “I don’t feel sick” I told her. As it turns out, she was referring to “jungle fever,” the condition when a black man or woman is attracted to someone of the opposite race.”
- A description
 - My aunt tends to her house as if it were her child. The rooms are spotless, the windows squeak, the kitchen counter is so shiny that I can see my reflection and the floors are so finely waxed that my sister and I sometimes slide across in socks and pretend that we are skating. Smells of soy sauce, scallions and red bean soup drift from the kitchen whenever I visit. The hum of the washing machine lulls me to sleep. In season, there are roses in the garden, and vases hold flowers arranged like those in a painting. My aunt enjoys keeping house, although she’s wealthy enough to hire someone to do it.
- A contrast
 - It’s one thing to mull over the possibility of cloning superstars such as Michael Jordan and to daydream about the effects on the NBA. It’s quite another task to think about cloning yourself”
- A question or problem
 - What if you have leukemia and cloning your own bone marrow could save your life? What if cloning were illegal, but you found that there was a way to do it? What if it

weren't your life but the life of your child? When it comes to ethics in medicine, it is difficult to draw the moral line.

- A historical review/some background
- Unusual facts
 - o The House of Representatives is composed of 435 members, 417 of which are white males. Ten of the others are women and nine are black. I belong to both of these minorities.
- A quotation
- A definition
 - o Dictionary.com defines *language* as "a body of words and the systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition." According to this definition, anyone can clearly see that Ebonics is, indeed, a language. Not slang. Not crappy English. A language, just like Russian and German and Bantu.
- An idea to be refuted

Race and genetics form their own double helix, twisting together through history. The Nazis, as everyone knows, justified the death camps on the grounds that Jews and Gypsies were genetically inferior—but what is less known is that the Nazis took their cue from eugenics legislation passed in the United States. Here, race is defined primarily by skin color. Since that's a genetic trait, the logic goes, race itself must be genetic, and there are differences that are more than skin deep. But that's not what modern genetics reveals"

INTROS TO AVOID

- Empty intros that wander vaguely around the subject without saying anything such as this: "Critical thinking is very interesting. There are many people who think critically. The rewards of critical thinking can be tremendous. There is nothing like witnessing a true critical thinker." Snore.
- The boring introduction that draws attention to the fact that you are writing a paper: "In this paper I will..."
- Apologies. "I'm not really an expert on this subject, but..."

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion has a real purpose. It is the place where you should evaluate your evidence. In your conclusion you should tell your reader what the evidence means—what insights you draw from your paper. Be witty and intelligent and show that your ideas matter.

END WITH...

- a reflection on the importance or implications of your thesis
- a call to action

- We must never accept these injustices as commonplace but must fight them with all our strength
- a hook
 - Refer back to the idea, image, or question you began your essay with. This gives your readers a satisfying sense of closure like a circle coming round.
- a vivid image or picture
- a quotation
- a rhetorical question
- an offer of a solution to a problem
- striking a note of reasonable hope
- a prediction

CONCLUSIONS TO AVOID

- The one-sentence or very short conclusion, which suggests there may be something wrong with the structure of your paper.
- Merely summarizing your paper or restating your thesis. The summary ending is a cliché that is so overused it seems amateurish.
- Using an overused phrase such as “in conclusion” or “to sum up.” Try to be more original.